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mpandevina [assistants]. An ox is killed near the tomb and a great deal of rice cooked. Men, women and children follow the cortege to the tomb dancing and singing. After the interment the *mpandevina* take their meal in the open air, returning to the village afterward. To end the fête one or more oxen are killed and the meat distributed to all the assistants. The funeral ceremony is called *mandrava lanona*. A funeral without cattle killing is scorned by the people. 764

"On the day of a funeral, before the cortege leaves for the *kibory* [clan tomb] the chief of the *kibory* stands before the body and makes the following speech: 'Oh thou who art dead, today we are separated forever, not by our wish but by the will of *Zanahary*. We will carry thee to the tomb where thy ancestors rest. Remain there with them and do not return to bring evil into the house. If, however, thy death has been caused by sorcery, may thy ghost quickly slay the evil doer. Do good to us and drive away all diseases.' After the body has been placed in the tomb the chief of the *kibory* or his representative makes the following speech: 'Oh you who are in this house, listen to what I say. We are now sending you so-and-so [giving name], one whom *Zanahary* has taken from us. Receive him to rest with you. Do not let him wander everywhere. Do not scorn him, for he is one of the last little children of one from whom we are all descended.'

"In former times *Mpanzaka* [kings] were usually interred secretly. When a king was ill no one except the members of his family could enter the house where he was. A post, *adiby*, was set up in front of his door as a prohibition to enter. If the king died he was buried secretly that night by the village chiefs and *Notables*. His wives, children and relatives were forbidden to weep or to wear any sign of mourning. If asked how the king was they must answer that he was *mafanafana* [indisposed]. The reason for this was that the tribes were constantly at war and the king was the military leader. If the enemy learned the king was dead they would attack the leaderless tribe and almost certainly defeat it. After some months, during which the people had chosen a new king, guns were fired on the highest hill in the tribe's territory. This announced the death of the king. On learning the sad news everyone wept in the villages. As a sign of grief they unbraided their hair and wore it hanging loose, and dressed in old mats. All the people went to the king's village. There they feasted for several days during which cattle were killed and the meat distributed. The new king was placed in a special house and no one might approach him except the *Anakandriana* 766 643 [72]

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766 643 [village chiefs] and *Notables*. At the end of the fête the new king, accompanied by all the people, left his hiding to enter the *trano be*. There was a great feast, the rejoicing being kept up until morning. Before they returned to their homes the new king gave the people one or two oxen which were killed and the meat distributed.

"Certain kings requested before their death that they should not be buried secretly. In this case the people chose a new king quickly, always from the royal family. The new king was put in a house in a secluded part of the village until the funeral was over. After his election the body of the dead king was placed in the *trano be* surrounded by women of the noble caste. A man of the Antimanga gens lay down close to the body and did not leave it until it was placed in the coffin. The men went to the forest to make a *loka* [coffin]. When it was ready they brought it into the village at night, unknown to the inhabitants. The body was placed in it and hung up in the *trano be*. Next day, at cockcrow, conch shell trumpets were sounded and guns fired in the air to announce the king's death. All the people wept and hastened to the king's village. All bulls which had lived in the same time as the king were killed, the meat distributed among all the people and the fat burned in the *trano be*. [The first part of this passage is not clear. The writer may mean bulls born in the year of the king's ascension or bulls born on the king's birthday.] The neighboring tribes were invited and during fifteen or thirty days tribesmen and strangers alike did nothing but feast. The king's body decomposed in the coffin, which was taken down and emptied from time to time. Sometimes only the bones were left to take to the *kibory*. At the end of the fifteen or thirty days they buried the skeleton and the new king made his solemn entry into the *trano le*."

764 Shaw, who visited the Ikongo shortly after 1870, says: "They make no tombs but bury their dead in the forest with no other mark than a notched tree to keep the spot in remembrance. The carrying of the body to its last resting place is accompanied by yelling and screaming but I saw no ostentatious mourning and weeping, as with the Betsileo. At certain places on the road the body is placed on the ground and a series of games is commenced in which wrestling and spear exercise form an important part. 'Burying is called 'throwing [113] away the corpse.'" (Shaw, George A., Notes on Ikongo and Its People, Antananarivo Annual, Vol. 1, 1875, p. 69.) Grandidier also says: "The Ikongo do not erect any tombs; they inter their dead in the forest and are content with marking the place by the help of a notch

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cut in the nearest tree. Their funerals are unaccompanied with cries or weeping." (Grandidier, A., Funeral Ceremonies among the Malagasy, Antananarivo Annual, Vol. IV, 1889–92, p. 314.) My own informants denied that the Ikongo buried in this way, insisting that all the gentes used the *kibory* ("gens tomb"). It is possible that the above quotations refer to an ancient form of disposal which is now obsolete, or that it was the practice of only a few clans, or, less probably, that they refer to a temporary disposal prior to the real funeral, like that which still exists among the Menabe.

764 [113]

MENABE BURIAL CUSTOMS

Among the Manandriana division of the Tanala Menabe the funeral ceremonies are practically the same for all people, for in the old days there were no castes. The differences are simply in the expensiveness of the feast. If a family has not enough food to make a good funeral the relatives may quietly take the body to the forest and leave it there until after the rice harvest, when it is brought back, the funeral made, and the bones taken to the tomb.

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Immediately after death the body is washed and the hair arranged by relatives of the same sex. If it is a king this is done on the knees of slaves or officers. It is then wrapped in a *lamba* of raffia or of natural colored *hafotra* ("bast"). The latter is called *sembo avoha*. The *lamba* is drawn up over the head but the face is left uncovered. If it should be covered the spirit could not find its road. Some of the other Menabe gentes occasionally wrap the body in a mat rubbed with wood ashes and put it in a large container of folded bark, as a crude attempt at preservation. The body is laid in the middle of the northern half of its own house with the head east. Some gentes consider it a hardship to bury quickly and keep the body in the house as much as a month, burning the fat of cattle to overpower the smell, but the Manandriana keep it only two or three days, never more than a week even for kings. During this time persons under twenty years old are excluded, also, according to one informant, pregnant women. The other people enter the house, mourn and also sing and dance. The songs are funeral chants called *susejo*. While the body lies in the house a few cattle are killed each day to feast the people and quantities of rice are pounded in preparation for the great feast on the day before the interment. Most of the cattle are also saved for this.

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On the day before the interment the cattle to be killed are driven to the *kiasan* ("village square") and the pounded rice piled up there

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764 on mats. A man belonging to the family of either the father or the mother of the deceased makes a *kabary* ("speech") thanking everyone for his sympathy and announcing what each person has given to the bereaved family, together with his name. It is customary for relatives and friends to make small gifts to help defray the funeral expenses. The speaker then thanks everyone again and announces that the interment will take place next morning in such and such a tomb. He also says that anyone who lives at a distance, or who has important business, is now free to return home. After this there is a feast. Cattle are killed and the rice and part of the meat cooked, the rest of the meat being distributed to the people to take home.

The next morning the body is taken to the tomb by the *angoma*, members of the village who always perform this office. In the village [115] of Raindranaivo, my principal informant, there were four of these, but the number does not seem to be fixed. The office is not hereditary and they seem to be chosen for their willingness to enter the tomb and handle the corpses. If an *angoma* is away and a member of his lineage becomes seriously ill he is sent for and is in duty bound to return. Each *angoma* receives a chicken and 2.50 francs for his services.

The body is carried out of the house by the regular door and taken directly to the tomb. If an ordinary person it is usually lashed to a pole, for ease in transport, but if a chief the *angoma* carry it in their hands. The people accompany the body singing and dancing. When they reach the tomb there is a small *kabary* at which those who have come this far are again thanked and told that they can go back as what remains to be done is the work of the *angoma*. They return except for four or five of the closest relatives who remain until the body is placed in the tomb. The *angoma* arrange the bodies in the tomb to make a place for the new corpse and take up the skulls of the parents and grandparents of the deceased, placing them above his body. After the funeral the relatives return to the house of death and stay two or three days, then go home.

766 Only one king of the Menabe, Raindranaivo, is known to have been buried at night and this was done in imitation of the Imerina practice. In further imitation he was buried in a separate tomb, not in that of his gens. He died at a distance and his body was brought back to his capital. He was mourned for three days and buried at midnight.

764 Grandidier says of the Tanala, presumably some of the northern gentes: "The free Tanala do not inter their dead until they have lain

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in state for a month or so. For three days they leave the corpse uncovered; but after this they wrap it in red *lambs* [mantles] and place it in a coffin, which they do not carry to the cemetery until the completion of the month. The liquid products of decomposition flow upon the earthen floor of the house and are simply covered with earth. During all the time of the lying-in-state the surviving partner (husband or wife) sleeps in the house as if his or her spouse were still living. This custom obtains also among the Betsimisaraka, Tanosy and other tribes. The coffin is deposited in a solitary place in the forest and is surrounded by a palisade of tree trunks which hides its cover.

"The *andriana* or chiefs whose ancestors are of foreign (Arab) extraction, are, on the contrary, interred on the very day of their death. The coffin, with a lid in the shape of a roof, on which is fixed a pair of horns, is carried into the dense forest and placed under a kind of shed. An image, suspended in a corner of the house where the death took place, receives for six weeks all the signs of grief and marks of regret from the people, after which it is thrown into the nearest river with great ceremony. The royal cemetery is visited from time to time to renew the coffins when they fall into decay and also to change the *lambs* in which the bones are enveloped." (Grandidier, *op. cit.*, pp. 313-314.)[1] All my Menabe informants denied the existence of most of the features in which the above account differs from my own and I can only assume that the practices described are those of some gens with which I never came in contact.

TOMBS

All the Tanala employ communal tombs known as *kibory*, but there is a good deal of variation in detail. Some of the present differences may be due to the diverse origin of the various gentes, but there can be little doubt that the Tanala burial practices have been influenced by those of their neighbors on the east and west. To make these influences clear it seems best to give a brief description of the tombs used by the tribes bordering on their territory.

The Imerina and Betsileo, who occupy the plateau to the west, employ family vaults. When a man becomes sufficiently rich he will build a tomb for himself and his descendants. This will be used by his children, grandchildren, etc., in the male line until one of them decides to found a tomb of his own. A person who does this acquires great prestige and becomes the ancestor of a new family. New tombs are constantly being erected and the whole line of descendants will

[1] [See p. 178, and query 86 or 764 - Ed.]

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764 rarely use the same tomb for more than three or four generations. The tombs are always built in prominent places, beside roads, etc. The Imerina sometimes sacrifice at them but the Betsileo do not. Neither group has special persons appointed as tomb guardians.

764 618 778 The tribes of the southeast coast, who border the Tanala on the east, employ gens tombs founded, at least in theory, by the original gens ancestor. No new tombs are founded by individuals and as the gens grows and expands its territory the single tomb comes to be used by a number of villages. The gens tomb is always in a secluded place, surrounded by a grove of trees, and, if possible, near the sacred river. Only the tomb guardian or persons he designates can approach it at ordinary times. It is, however, the center of the religious life of the gens. Important sacrifices are made there and trials for sorcery are held at it. There is an hereditary official known as the *Loky Kibory* ("chief" or "guardian of the *kibory*") who is the religious head of the gens with powers approaching those of the secular chief. He not only has charge of the *kibory* and everything pertaining to it, but offers the sacrifices to the ancestors and punishes infractions of tribal custom, such as incest.

764 The Tanala practices vary between these two extremes without fully arriving at either. In a very general way it may be said that the southern clans lean toward the southeast coast practice while the northern ones lean toward that of the plateau. Among the Tanala Ikongo the *kibory* almost conforms to the southeastern pattern. Sadaro Antoine says: "The *kibory* is situated far from villages so that the ghosts will not disturb the tranquillity of the living. It is in a cave. The bodies are laid one upon another with the exception 766 of the *Mpanjaka* [king] who is placed in a coffin on an elevated place to the east. Persons who die of contagious diseases [lepers and smallpox victims] or children who die under a month old are not admitted to the *kibory*. The latter are buried in marshy ground. Sorcerers are also excluded unless a number of cattle have been killed 764 to rectify the fault. The chief of the *kibory* is a simple chief of the family but he receives a certain respect from the natives. He makes regulations that no one may burn the forest near where the *kibory* is located, or enter the forest or cut a single tree in it. Anyone who breaks these rules has to pay a fine of a large ox. When the tomb has to be repaired or when the ancestors wish a new tomb, it is the chief of the *kibory* who calls the family together to do this. For this work he has to kill many cattle and furnish a quantity of rice for the workers. A sacrifice of twenty or thirty cattle is an average for a

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764 766 The bodies are laid in the tomb with the heads east, without coffins. Men and women are piled together indiscriminately unless the builder of the tomb has specified otherwise. Even chiefs are interred with the rest, although a few of the kings demanded individual tombs in imitation of the Imerina practice. Lepers and smallpox victims are excluded, but in some cases their bones seem to be put in after a few years of temporary interment in the ground. Sorcerers and other criminals are also excluded, their bodies being left [618] for the dogs to eat. It is a universal rule that only members of the gens can be buried in the *lolory*.

769 The tomb is transferred if the village is transferred or if a better site has been found. When the new tomb is ready, the day before the transfer, the two or three most important men of the village come to the tomb and call: "Hallo, so-and-so and so-and-so," giving the names of all the important dead they know, "you are the great ones of the family here. Your tomb and residence here are bad. You know this and we know it too. We are going to transfer you tomorrow to such and such a place. Assemble all the family here, assemble the children and all your baggage, for tomorrow we will go there."

Next morning all the *Fokonolona* ("village council") come to the tomb and kill an ox to the east of it, i.e., by the heads of the dead. They spread out mats with raffia *lambas* ("mantles") on top. They then take out all the bodies and lay them on the *lambas* and sew them up into bundles. The bodies of wives and husbands are sewn up together, when known, all the children are put in one bundle and the oldest dead, who have fallen to pieces, in another. The bundles are then wrapped in mats and tied to carrying poles with vines. It is forbidden to use ropes. A little of the sacrificed ox is grilled and eaten at the old tomb, but most of it is carried along for the feast at the new tomb. If it is a long trip a stop may be made and a meal cooked en route. On the way the people sing and play tricks on each other and sometimes wrestle. One trick is for the man on the rear end of the carrying pole to push suddenly and try to throw the front man down.

When they reach the new tomb all the bodies are put down outside. A special house has been built there and the people spend the night in this, singing and dancing. They feast that night and again the next morning, killing sometimes as many as ten oxen, depending on the wealth of the village. After breakfast they put the bodies in the new tomb. The body of the most important ancestor, except for his skull, is put at the bottom of the pit or box

779 on a *sarity* [finely woven mat] before the eastern door. A person of
769 either sex, but always of noble caste, carries the little basket on his
749 head to the river. The procession marches around the house three times singing. When the procession arrives at the river an ox is killed, *ara maromaitsa* [black and white] or *maromaitsa lohe* [black with white marks on the forehead]. The throat is cut at the edge of the river so that blood falls into the water. The *kowory* is taken from its basket and a man of the noble caste wears it as a bandoleer while swimming. While he crosses the river the rejoicing increases. The *drakitro* [a variety of drum] is beaten and the women chant in monotone. After a few minutes the swimmer returns to the edge of the river and puts the *kowory* back in its basket. After a feast all return to the village with rejoicing and the little basket is put back in its place.

"The *famanaina kowory* [feeling the *kowory*] may be held at any time. For this they kill an ox, always one of the previously mentioned colors. It is killed to the east of the *kowory's* house by a man of noble caste. After a prayer they take a part of each of the different sorts of meat [i.e., the parts used in sacrifice] which are cooked and eaten by the assistants. They then pull off the hump and salt it with *sira ranio* [sea salt]. When it has been salted it is fastened on top of the crocodile teeth with raffia and left for a minimum of three or a maximum of six days. At the end of this time it is eaten by the guardian. In case of a calamity, such as an epidemic of locusts, etc., the protection of the *kowory* is asked."

LOST BODIES

• 766 The loss of a body causes much grief to the relatives and every effort is made to recover it. The main causes of such loss are now death at a distance and drowning. In the first case the body is buried without ceremony and a year or more later, when the flesh has decayed, some of the male relatives dig it up and bring it home. A regular funeral is then held and the bones put in the *gova* tomb. If the person has been drowned the core of a banana tree is taken and a silver bracelet put upon it. It is then thrown into the water near where the person disappeared and is believed to float along until it comes over the place where the body lies, when it stops and balances. The relatives then dive for the body.

If the body cannot be recovered the Ibongo hold a brief funeral over his sleeping mat and pillow, which are placed in the *fahory* ("gova tomb"), and later erect a stone in his honor. Among the Manandriana division of the Menabe the pillow and mat are not

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mand. If the person is rich and important they raise a stone for him. If not the whole family assembles in his parents' house, kills an ox if rich enough, feasts, drinks rum and sings and dances all night and until the noon meal the next day. There is no invocation or ceremony and nothing is taken to the tomb. Among some of the other Menabe the relatives take a banana trunk, wrap it in cloth, lay it in the house in the place the corpse would occupy, and go through the complete funeral ceremony, including mourning, over it. The banana trunk is thrown away after the ceremony and the cloth may be used. A similar practice existed among the Imerina but there the cloth was wrapped around a *tsangambato* ("upright stone") erected in honor of the deceased. A banana tree is used as a substitute for the body because the banana plant symbolizes a man. Like fortunate human beings it dies only in old age, after it has borne fruit, and leaves offspring, i.e., the new shoots that push up from the root of the plant. The form of the fruit is another reason the Menabe give for choosing it, for the banana is to the natives a phallic symbol and an emblem of fertility.

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MOURNING CUSTOMS

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Mourning is never violent. There is no loud wailing, beating or the breast or self mutilation. Mourners of both sexes wear old and dirty clothes, allow their hair to hang loose and dishevelled and rarely bathe. Distant relatives wear mourning for one or two months, a husband or wife usually for six months, and a parent who has lost a beloved child may wear it for a year or more.

Among the Menabe the relatives assemble at the house of death one or two months after the funeral to put off mourning. All persons who have entered the house while the body lay in it are expected to be there. An ox is killed and a person who is the only child of his or her mother asperges the place where the corpse has lain with the blood. The same person then takes more of the blood, rum, white powder made by grating the *akondro* fungus, and the plants *orivodre*, *taimainoro*, *ofovo*, *mahipaka* and *longose*, cut in small pieces, and puts all in a large wooden bowl with water. He then takes some of the mixture in a cupped leaf and pours a little into the hands of everyone present. They wash their faces with it and this ends the mourning period. Some begin at once to grease and braid their hair while others sing and dance. The ceremony ends with a feast. The Ikongo also have a ceremony to end mourning, but I could not learn the details.